

March 15, 2021

House Committee on Human Services
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Leif, Vice-Chair Ruiz, and Members of the Committee:

As an orthopedic surgeon practicing medicine in Salem, **I strongly support Oregon House Bill 2348**. This measure would guarantee that plant-based meals would be available at all times for Oregonians.

In my hospital it is frustrating to see what patients are served post-operatively. Many are eating “Grand Slam” style breakfasts. I respect that patients may choose comfort foods, but we also must offer the most healthful options that will aid in recovery and long-term health. Considerable evidence supports plant-based foods as most optimal for the prevention and reversal of the common chronic diseases that many Oregonians face such as heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.

Every hospital in Oregon can offer these options. A fundamental tenet in medicine is to “do no harm.” Yet, hospitals continue to provide unhealthy meals to patients but inexplicably fail to provide adequate healthy plant-based options.

There is no shortage of healthful and delicious plant-based foods and they are cost effective. Instead of the “Grand Slam” style breakfast, a healthier choice could be a bowl of warm oats with fresh berries or breakfast burrito with black beans, sweet potato hash, and fresh salsa. Every hospital in Oregon can offer these options, but hospitals inexplicably fail to provide adequate plant-based options.

My conversations with hospital leadership have not resulted in consistent healthier options. My patients tell me if they had a plant based choice on the menu that they would choose it. I commend the Committee for taking up this important issue to put into statute that plant-based options be available and on the menu for patients across the state.

This important measure would offer the chance for Oregonians to select a plant-based meal to support a healthy recovery from illnesses and injuries as well as start the journey of preventing and reversing chronic diseases. Thank you for your consideration, **I strongly urge your support of HB 2348**.

Sincerely,

Sudeep Taksali, M.D.
sudeep.taksali@hopeorthopedics.com